ANNUAL REPORT
1985–86

Alberta Health and Social Services
Disciplines Committee

Alberta Health & Social Services Disciplines Committee
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	A. History of the Committee	
	B. Mandate of the Committee	
	C. Membership of the Committee	
	D. Major Activities of the Committee	
II.	HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE MANPOWER PLANNING	5
III.	MANPOWER INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION	7
	A. Survey of Professional Associations and Registration Boards	
	B. Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel	
	C. Survey of Health and Social Service Training Programs	
	D. Nursing Manpower Model	
	E. Health and Social Service Manpower Indicators	
	F. Publications	
	G. Information Requests	
IV.	LIAISON ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE	13
	Appendix A: Terms of Reference of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee	15
	Appendix B: Membership of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee	16

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the ninth annual report of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The report describes the Committee's history, mandate, structure, and activities for the period of April 1, 1985 to March 31, 1986.

A. History of the Committee

There was an early recognition of the important role played by manpower planning in the delivery of quality health care and social services. In 1973 an interdepartmental committee called the Alberta Health Manpower Committee was established. Its purpose was to provide a formal coordinating mechanism among a number of provincial government departments with respect to planning activities on human services manpower and training. The Committee was made up of senior officials from the Department of Health and Social Development, Department of Labour and Manpower, Department of Advanced Education, and the Alberta Hospitals Services Commission. The Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Social Development chaired the Alberta Health Manpower Committee.

Changes in provincial government departments in 1975 made it necessary to reorganize the interdepartmental coordinating body. In August 1976, the Ministers of Social Services and Community Health, Advanced Education and Manpower, and Hospitals and Medical Care established the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The first meeting of the Committee was held in September of that year.

There was another change in departmental representation on the Committee in 1982 following the restructuring of some departments. Since 1982, four departments have been

represented on the Committee: Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health.

B. Mandate of the Committee

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee was established:

1. To advise the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the Departments of Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health on major human services manpower, training, and related issues; and

2. To coordinate the four departments' planning, research, and data collection activities for health and social service manpower.

The formal terms of reference of the Committee appear in Appendix A on page 15.

C. Membership of the Committee

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee is made up of a non-government Chairman and six senior officials from the Departments of Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health. The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A., was appointed by the Ministers of the four departments.

There is an interdepartmental Secretariat to provide research and planning support to the Committee. The Secretariat consists of staff members from the four participating departments. Dr. Raymond Pong of the Department of Social Services and Community Health serves as the Executive Secretary of the Committee.

A number of personnel changes occured in the Secretariat during 1985-86. Ms. Barbara Leung left the Department of Social Services and Community Health, and her position in the Secretariat was filled by Dr. Habib Fatoo. Mr. Edward Bruce was replaced by Ms. Pat DeZutter of the Department of Advanced Education.

A list of the members of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee and the Committee's Secretariat appears in Appendix B on page 16.

D. Major Activities of the Committee

The Committee met seven times during the year to discuss major issues and policy recommendations. The Secretariat met as frequently as necessary to prepare background documents for the Committee's consideration and to undertake other assignments.

Other major activities of the Committee included the collection of human services manpower data, publication of documents for public release, dissemination of manpower information to the public, and liaison with other jurisdictions. A more detailed description of these activities appears in the following sections.

II. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE MANPOWER PLANNING

The policy advisory role of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee focuses on two major areas. It examines broad manpower policy matters that are interdepartmental and interdisciplinary in nature. It also makes policy recommendations to the government regarding specific human services disciplines and on specific manpower and training issues.

Recognizing the impacts that the economy and government policies might have on health care, social services, and the labor market, the Committee paid special attention to health and social service manpower issues in the context of changing social and economic conditions.

In addition, the Committee was interested in relating manpower and training issues to health care and social service policies. The intent was to develop broad manpower strategies which were compatible with major policy thrusts of the Departments of Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health. To this end, the participating departments were asked to present departmental strategic plans and their manpower implications. It was hoped that through information sharing and interdepartmental consultations, a more systematic joint planning process with respect to human services manpower could be developed.

The Committee also devoted much effort and resources to addressing a number of specific manpower concerns. Some of these were identified by the Committee. Others were issues raised by Ministers, Deputy Ministers, professional bodies, post-secondary educational institutions, and health care and social service organizations. Two major areas received special attention during 1985-1986: rehabilitation therapy manpower and foot care

manpower. In response to the chronic and critical shortages of rehabilitation therapy personnel, the Committee undertook a major study on future manpower and training requirements in physical therapy and occupational therapy. The study resulted in a series of recommendations directed to the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the four participating departments. The issue of foot care manpower was identified by the service sector and organizations representing senior citizens such as local health authorities and the Provincial Senior Citizens Advisory Council. Following a review of foot care services in Alberta, the Committee made a number of recommendations to the Ministers and Deputy Ministers on foot care manpower, training of personnel, and the regulation of foot care practitioners.

Other issues were also dealt with by the Committee. These included professions legislation, dental and dental auxiliary manpower and training, training of child care workers, nursing manpower and training, and the utilization and training of registered nursing assistants. Another major study undertaken by the Secretariat was on native health and social service manpower and training in Alberta. At the end of the 1985-86 fiscal year, this study was still in progress.

Realizing that it cannot possibly address all health and social service manpower issues, the Committee has encouraged other government departments, the human services sector, and the education sector to engage in manpower planning in order to meet their specific human resource needs. To this end, the Committee, through its Secretariat, has provided manpower information to assist other organizations in their manpower planning activities.

III. MANPOWER INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

Comprehensive and up-to-date health and social service manpower information and data are needed to support the research and planning work of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The collection of manpower data is also a mandate given to the Committee by the Ministers. Responding to this need, the participating departments undertook a number of major data collection tasks under the auspices of the Committee. These included annual surveys of employers of health and social service personnel, professional associations and registration boards, and human service training programs in post-secondary educational institutions. These surveys were designed to monitor manpower supply and demand situations and changes in labor market trends in the human services sector.

Data collected by the Committee were shared with other government departments and non-government organizations through a series of publications. Information was also made available to the public upon request.

A. Survey of Professional Associations and Registration Boards

Membership and registration data of professional associations and registration boards are an important source of information on manpower supply. A survey of 62 health and social service professional associations and registration boards was undertaken by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee in December 1985. The survey was conducted by means of a mailed questionnaire. Information was requested from each organization on the number of registered members, the number of persons joining and leaving the profession in the previous membership year,

sources of new members, and the availability and nature of continuing education programs. Excellent cooperation was obtained from the professional associations and registration boards surveyed.

B. **Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel**

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee began surveying employers of health and social service personnel on a regular basis in 1979. The surveys were designed to collect information on the current number of practicing health and social service personnel and the current levels of vacancy and personnel turnover in the province.

A survey of employers was conducted on March 31, 1985 on behalf of the Committee by the Department of Social Services and Community Health with assistance from the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care and the Department of Advanced Education. Over 4,300 employers of health and social service personnel in the province were contacted. With a response rate of over 98 percent, the survey obtained manpower data on 81 human services disciplines. Additional information on specialties and levels of educational preparation was collected from ambulance personnel, child care workers, registered nurses, and social workers.

C. **Survey of Health and Social Service Training Programs**

The Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education conducted, on behalf of the Committee, a survey of health and social service training programs in post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta. Since training programs are a major source of human services personnel, the purpose of this survey is to obtain information on potential manpower supply. The survey was designed to collect data on the number of applicants, enrolment quotas,

actual enrolments, and number of graduates from training programs. Over 110 programs in universities, technical institutes, community colleges, and vocational centers, as well as hospital-based training programs, were surveyed.

D. Nursing Manpower Model

The Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education maintained the Nursing Manpower Model on behalf of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The Nursing Manpower Model is a computer program which can provide nursing manpower projections based on different assumptions and data inputs. As nurses are one of the largest occupational groups in the health care sector, the Committee was kept informed of nursing manpower trends and manpower projections.

E. Health and Social Service Manpower Indicators

In 1982, the Committee introduced the use of manpower indicators in an effort to enhance its capability to monitor health and social service manpower trends in Alberta. Employing secondary information, such as administrative data and published statistics from a variety of sources, the indicators provide timely indications of labor market trends in the human services sector. The indicators, compiled by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee, are intended to supplement the annual survey of employers and the survey of professional associations and licensing boards.

The development of health and social service manpower indicators was hampered in 1985-86 by the discontinuation by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission of a number of labor force statistics series, on which some of the manpower indicators were based. The Secretariat of the

Committee is reviewing the feasibility of continuing the manpower indicators project even though some important information is no longer available, and is examining alternative sources of secondary data.

F. Publications

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee publishes, in addition to its **Annual Report**, a number of manpower documents which are widely distributed to other government departments, non-government agencies, educational institutions, professional associations, and public libraries. Through these publications, the Committee shares its manpower information with the public and promotes the awareness of human services manpower issues.

In December 1985, the Committee released the results of its March 31, 1985 survey of employers. The "Summary Report of the Survey of Health and Social Service Personnel Working in Alberta, March 31, 1985," published by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee, contains manpower information on 81 disciplines in the health care and social service field. The information contained in the publication includes the number of full-time equivalent positions, vacancy rates, and turnover rates of 81 occupational groups, as well as historical manpower trends. More than 5,000 copies of the survey report were distributed.

In December 1985, the Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education published, on behalf of the Committee, a report entitled **Alberta Health and Social Service Training Program Inventory, 1984-1985**. This report contains information on human services training programs in Alberta, including enrolment data, program duration, and number of graduates. Several hundred copies

of the inventory were sent to interested organizations and individuals.

A report entitled **Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1984** was published in the Fall of 1985 by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee. This report, the seventh in a series, provides basic manpower information and statistical data on 35 health and social service disciplines. The information contained in this publication was obtained from the survey of employers, the survey of professional associations and registration boards, and the survey of human services training programs. About 750 copies of the publication were distributed.

G. Information Requests

One of the tasks of the Secretariat of the Committee is to provide health and social service manpower information to the public in order to encourage manpower planning activities and to help solve manpower problems. As the Committee's work has become better known, the number of requests for publications and information has steadily increased in recent years. The Executive Secretary and other members of the Secretariat have provided manpower information upon request to Alberta government departments, government departments in other provinces, educational institutions, professional associations, human services agencies, consultants, and the general public.

IV. LIAISON ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee works closely with other departments and governmental bodies which engage in manpower planning and related activities. This is to ensure that recommendations made and actions taken by the Committee are consistent with overall government policies.

In view of the fact that professions legislation often has important manpower implications, the Committee has maintained a close working relationship with the Professions and Occupations Bureau and the Health Disciplines Board, which are responsible for developing regulatory legislation for occupational groups. The Executive Director of the Bureau was invited to address the Committee. The Secretary/Registrar of the Health Disciplines Board sits on the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee as an observer. In addition, officials knowledgeable in health care and social services were often invited to meetings to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

In order to keep abreast of developments and manpower planning activities in other parts of the country, three members of the Committee's Secretariat (Ms. Janet Davidson, Mr. William Novasky, and Dr. Raymond Pong) have maintained close contacts with their counterparts in other provinces and territories through their membership on the Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources (previously known as the Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Manpower), which reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health. Ms. Janet Davidson also participated in the Joint Working Group on Graduates of Foreign Medical Schools, which is a subcommittee of the Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on Human Resources and the National Committee on Physician Manpower.

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

1. In conjunction with appropriate agencies, develop on an ongoing basis inventories on:

    i) Health and social services disciplines training programs;
    ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.

2. Review pertinent studies, data and executive decisions from other jurisdictions on the training and supply of health and social services manpower.

3. Review short and long range plans from appropriate agencies for:

    i) Health and social services disciplines training program;
    ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.

4 Review alternative requirements to meet the needs for the development of health and social services in the future.

5. Define areas of particular concern in the training and/or supply and/or distribution of health and social services personnel and recommend ways of resolving these concerns.

6. Advise from time to time on request for the need for in-depth studies in particular areas of manpower training and supply.

7. Undertake such other related activities as may be required.

8. Submit an annual report on the activities of the Committee.

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE
ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE
(As of March 31, 1986)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Elvin A. Christenson, F.C.A., Chairman, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Dr. D.E. Berghofer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Program Services Division, Alberta Advanced Education

Mr. Larry Charach, Director, Division Support Branch, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Dr. A.V. Follett, Senior Medical Consultant, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mr. D.J. Junk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Development Division, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mr. John Lafrance, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Program Development, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Mr. Don Ogaranko, Director of Planning Services, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Manpower

MEMBERS OF THE SECRETARIAT

Dr. Raymond W. Pong, Executive Secretary, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee (Policy and Program Development, Alberta Social Services and Community Health)

Ms. Janet Davidson, Manager of Evaluation and Manpower Planning, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Ms. Pat DeZutter, Program Consultant, Health and Social Service Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education

Dr. Habib Fatoo, Director of Planning and Evaluation, Division Support, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Mrs. Vivien Lai, Director, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mr. Ian Montgomerie, Research Officer, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Manpower

Mr. William E. Novasky, Director, Health and Social Service Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education

OBSERVER

Mr. Dennis Gartner, Secretary/Registrar, Health Disciplines Board, Professions and Occupations Bureau